



MARY LOU DICKERSON

State Representative • 36th Legislative District



2004 Session Report

Committees

Chairwoman, Juvenile Justice
& Family Law
Children & Family Services
Transportation

District Office

2208 NW Market St.
Suite 310-A
Seattle, WA 98107
(206) 545-6513

Olympia Office

PO Box 40600
Mod 1 Building - rm 107
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7860

Toll-free Legislative Hotline

1-800-562-6000

TDD (for hearing impaired)

1-800-635-9993

E-mail

dickerso_ma@leg.wa.gov

Web page

[http://hdc.leg.wa.gov/
members/dickerson](http://hdc.leg.wa.gov/members/dickerson)

Dear Friends,

As I write my final newsletter of the 58th Legislature, I can't help but reflect on how much better the ending is than the beginning. In 2003, we faced a massive budget crisis and a transportation crisis. Today, the budget picture is much improved (though still not great), and we've made strong progress on transportation investments. We've come a long way.

In this newsletter, I report on some key issues from the 2004 session, tell you how your neighbors responded to my 2004 survey, and invite you to an important town hall meeting with all your state legislators on May 15.

Please remember that even though the Legislature is no longer in session, I serve you all year round. My assistant, Jenny Egan, and I are back in our district office in downtown Ballard (Ballard Office Building, corner of 22nd and Market Street: Suite 310-A. Phone: 206-545-6513). Feel free to call or email us to make an appointment, share your ideas or voice your concerns.

It feels good to be home. Thank you again for the honor and pleasure of representing the best legislative district in the state!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Lou Dickerson".

Mary Lou Dickerson

Senior property-tax relief

Victory! A new law enables an estimated **40,000 additional senior citizen households** to qualify for senior property-tax relief – and a Queen Anne senior's testimony helped to make it happen. Mrs. Avery's testimony for a House committee on the importance of senior property-tax relief was very persuasive. Thank you Mrs. Avery!

Our new law not only increases the top income ceiling for senior property-tax relief from \$30,000 to \$35,000, it allows seniors to deduct costs for Medicare insurance and adult boarding homes when calculating eligibility for relief. For a complete description of the changes made to the senior property-tax relief program, please contact my district office (206) 545-6513.



Session Briefs

The tragedy of domestic violence

We were all shocked and saddened when a Tacoma Police Chief killed his wife, Crystal Brame, and himself in front of their young children, but we learned from the tragedy. As Chairwoman of the Juvenile Justice & Family Law Committee, I had a lead role in advocating new policies to reduce domestic violence while strengthening protections for victims. New laws we enacted:

- Require all law enforcement agencies to develop policies for dealing with officer-involved domestic violence.

- Prohibit officers from bringing weapons into court when they are party to a domestic violence or harassment proceeding.
- Create a fine of up to \$100 for domestic violence offenses, with all revenues devoted to domestic violence prevention and victim advocacy.
- Add \$2 million in state funding for domestic violence shelters.
- Help victims of domestic violence to keep or find safe housing.

A better budget

I'm pleased that the improving, but still challenging, budget picture enabled us to restore some funding and make modest investments that were impossible in last year's budget emergency. Highlights from our 2004 supplemental budget include:

- Increasing community health clinics funding by 25%.
- Adding 3,000 college enrollment opportunities.
- Saving health insurance for 20,000+ low-income children
- Providing health benefit parity for school employees (\$23 more per month)
- Restoring dollars for local mental health services.

Cruise-ship pollution.

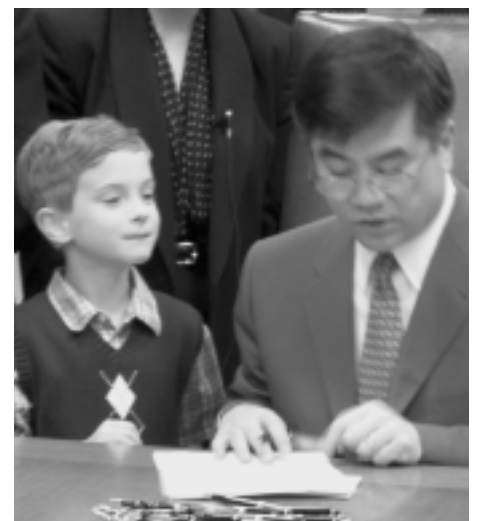
Thank you to the hundreds of local citizens who wrote to support my effort to protect Puget Sound against cruise-ship sewage and pollution! Unfortunately, my legislation did not pass this year. But I'm already working with environmental leaders on a new proposal to restrict cruise-ship dumping. In the meantime, we're trying to strengthen a voluntary agreement with cruise lines to respect our waters and sea-life during the current tour season.

Services for hearing-impaired kids.

We enacted my proposal to create an advisory council that will develop new standards on early intervention services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This effort grew out of a bipartisan task force I chaired last year. Early intervention can do much to help these children avoid problems and realize their full talents and potentials.

Education reform.

A new law allows students up to four tries to pass tests needed for graduation (starting in 2008), and to "bank" sections they have passed. We also protected over \$4 million of voter-approved levy funding for Seattle schools from losses due to the 2003 state budget cuts. Unfortunately, a needed proposal to allow school levies to pass with a simple majority died in the Senate (again), as did an attempt to reexamine funding options for public schools. Our children simply won't get the world-class education they'll need to succeed in the global economy until lawmakers improve funding for schools and teachers.



Joshua Berry smiles as Gov. Locke signs my bill to help hearing-impaired children.

2004 Session Report

2004 Legislative Survey Results

The 36th District has done it again! Most lawmakers who do legislative surveys get hundreds of responses. *Thousands* of local residents responded to my 2004 survey. That is a tribute to how much people in our area care about the future of Seattle and our state, and makes me even prouder to be your representative. Here's how people responded to our survey questions:

1 How often do you use the Alaskan Way Viaduct?

Never 4%
Seldom 28%
Frequently 50%
Nearly every day 17%

2 If you use the Viaduct, what do you mainly use it for?

Commuting to work 41%
For school 1%
Shopping 47%
Business deliveries 10%

3 I've proposed raising income limits for senior property-tax relief from \$30,000 to \$35,000 to get relief to more seniors. How do you feel about this idea?

Strongly oppose 3%
Oppose 4%
Neutral 17%
Support 36%
Strongly Support 40%

4 I've proposed a law to allow state agencies to save taxpayer money by buying medicines from Canada, even though the Bush administration has asked states not to do this. What do you think about this proposal?

Strongly oppose 4%
Oppose 4%
Neutral 6%
Support 23%
Strongly Support 63%

5 Should Washington State bar further imports of low-level nuclear waste from other states until the current cleanup of Hanford is complete?

Yes - 80% No - 8% Don't know - 12%

6 Gov. Locke wants to re-enact \$74 million of business-tax incentives targeted to encourage research and development that promotes job growth. Do you support this use of tax dollars?

Yes - 35% No - 29% Don't Know - 36%

7 Lawmakers need to prioritize future investments in transportation. In addition to funding more road construction, do you think the state should invest more in the following transportation alternatives?

Buses	Yes - 82%	No - 18%
Trains	Yes - 82%	No - 18%
HOV lanes	Yes - 50%	No - 50%
Bike paths	Yes - 68%	No - 32%

8 Would you support legislation to prohibit teacher strikes and require binding arbitration to settle labor disputes between teachers and school districts?

Yes - 65% No - 15% Don't Know - 20%



Hundreds of people added personal comments on their survey responses. I read every one, and am replying to as many as possible. The comment that caused my biggest smile: *"Let's save the view from the viaduct for us poor peons to enjoy during our commute, instead of putting us in a tunnel and giving the view to people who can afford multi-million dollar condos."*

MARY LOU DICKERSON

State Representative
36th Legislative District

Affordable medicines from Canada

The measure I sponsored to save taxpayers at least \$300 million a year by allowing state-agency purchases of affordable medicines from Canada passed the House but, unfortunately, stalled in the Senate. The bill would also have helped private citizens to access medicines from Canada. Our 36th District survey showed local residents feel very strongly about this issue, and it will continue to be among my legislative priorities.



36th District Town Hall Meeting!

Please join Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Rep. Helen Sommers and me for an important Town Hall Meeting.

When: May 15, 2004 – 10 a.m. to noon.

Where: Ballard Northwest Senior Activity Center

5429 – 32 Ave NW, in Ballard

Why: To discuss new laws and policies enacted in the 2004 session and hear your thoughts about what our future priorities should be.

2004 Session Report

Mod 1 Bldg., Rm. 107
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

MARY LOU DICKERSON
Representative

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing